

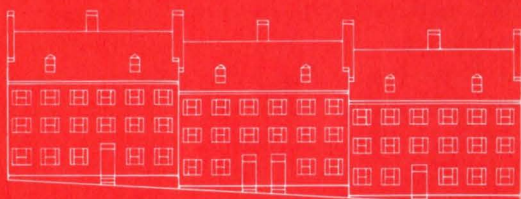
150 Years of Health Care: Anniversary Quilt and 19th Century Medical Instruments

An Exhibit by
Saint Joseph's Hospital

UNIVERSITY OF LOWELL
Center for Lowell History

PATRICK J. MOGAN
CULTURAL CENTER

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40 French Street Lowell, Massachusetts

December 1, 1989 - January 30, 1990

Monday through Friday 9 am - 5 pm

Saturdays 9 am - 3 pm

150th Anniversary Quilt 1839 - 1989

In 1988, members of Saint Joseph's Hospital and the local community came together to plan and create a dramatic piece of art. This piece of art - a display quilt - tells the story of the nation's first industrial hospital and the second oldest hospital in Massachusetts. Chartered in 1839 to provide medical care to mill workers, the hospital was originally sponsored by eleven textile companies and was known as the Lowell Corporation Hospital.

In 1930, during the Great Depression, the hospital was deeded to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and management was transferred to the Grey Nuns of the Cross. Now a full service community hospital, Saint Joseph's continues its founders' mission of compassion and quality health care.

Legend

In the center of the quilt is the Hospital's 150th Anniversary logo, designed by Mary Lou Lowrie, which highlights the Founders' House. Initially the home of Lowell's first architect and visionary, Kirk Boott, this building served as hospital and residence from 1839 to 1964.

Surrounding the logo are red bricks, the building blocks of Lowell and the Industrial Revolution. The various patterns of fabric reflect the designs of the cotton calico, woven and printed in Lowell's textile mills.

The four adjacent triangles are dedicated to the people who carry out the hospital's mission of compassion and care. They portray the special roles of physicians, nurses, nuns, and volunteers.

The corners of the quilt honor four individuals: Dr. Gilman Kimball, pioneering surgeon and physician whose vision and compassion led the Lowell Corporation Hospital. As the Corporation Hospital's first medical superintendent, he served the community for





27 years.

Father Louis Bachand, central figure in negotiating the transfer of the hospital as a gift from the Lowell corporations to the Catholic diocese, became Saint Joseph's first president and served on the board for 35 years.

Sister Alphonse Rodriguez, Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa, credited with the revitalization and expansion of the hospital, assumed the challenge of managing and staffing the deteriorating institution as Saint Joseph's first administrator.

Homer W. Bourgeois, leading Lowell Banker and concerned philanthropist, directed the expansion of Saint Joseph's facilities and services while President of the Hospital's Board of Directors from 1965 to 1977.

The squares at the top of the quilt are logos or designs of the order of the Grey Nuns of the Cross of Ottawa; cardiology and other diagnostic services; and the support auxiliary "Family of Saint Joseph's Hospital".

The squares along the right side of the quilt illustrate the hospital's roles: books = education of the community in medical and health care; tree = intertwining clinical and support services; Saint Joseph's logo = Catholic community hospital; rainbow and children = commitment to all cultures and ethnic communities.

The squares along the bottom of the quilt present the Family Birth Unit logo = family centered maternity services; nurses = Lowell's first School of Nursing 1887 - 1969; kidney dialysis patient = leadership in providing dialysis services throughout the Merrimack Valley.

The squares along the left side of the quilt show Saint Joseph and the Christ Child = the hospital's patron saint; ambulance = the emergency department and outpatient clinics; Staff of Aesculapius = symbol of medicine and healing; Bachand Hall = Lowell landmark and current residence of the Grey Nuns.

Patterns in the borders of the quilt symbolize the canals and waterwheels of Lowell, important steps in providing power to the mills for the production of textiles.

19th Century Medical Instruments

Health Care in the 19th century consisted of physicians working with few effective medicines, basic surgical instruments, and limited knowledge of diseases. They were seen as the last resort after home remedies and patent medicines had failed. During the Civil War, when choices for even minor wounds were either amputation or letting nature take its course, over 500,000 men died. For many of those "saved by the doctor" via amputation, death was often viewed as a blessing rather than suffering with uncontrolled infection.

Physicians made professional visits on horseback with saddlebags full of vials of compounds, various instruments, leeches and other paraphernalia of their profession. Not always easily available, medicinal compounds were mixed in mortars and surgical instruments were handmade by the physicians.

The instruments in this exhibit may appear crude by our standards and expectations but they were the very best available to physicians in the 19th century. Interestingly, many of these early instruments and procedures such as leeching are being reintroduced into current health care practice in very specialized situations.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Cassandra Gordon, Lowell, Massachusetts, has been a quiltmaker for 15 years. She has studied with Salley Palmer Field, Michael James, and Nancy Halpern. She opened her studio at the Brush Art Gallery and Studio in 1986. Her works have been exhibited at the Wenham Museum, Pollard Memorial Library, Garrison House, New England Quilt Museum, and are in private collections. The Saint Joseph's Hospital 150th Anniversary Quilt combined her creative skills and her concerns and knowledge of Lowell History.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all those who participated in the creation of the anniversary quilt and medical instrument exhibit.

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and

Lowell Historic Preservation Commission
Saint Joseph's Hospital
University of Lowell Center for Lowell History

THE PATRICK J. MOGAN CULTURAL CENTER

The mission of the Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center is to "tell the human story found in the history of the United States as an industrial nation, especially by concentrating on the lives of the working people of Lowell, Massachusetts.

The Center, which opened in 1989, is named in honor of Lowell's former Superintendent of Schools who developed the concept of an urban park focused on Lowell's unique heritage.

This former boarding house which housed Boott Mill employees from about 1837 was rehabilitated by the Lowell Historic Preservation Commission, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. It is an appropriate setting for the Lowell National Historical Park's interpretive exhibits on the theme of the Working People: Mill Girls, Immigrants, and Labor. The Center also houses the University of Lowell Center for Lowell History, and the University's Downtown Center for Continuing Education which offers year-round classes. A wide variety of cultural programs is also offered throughout the year at the Center.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITS

Any organization, group, or individual who is interested in developing a temporary exhibit at the Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center should contact the Lowell Historic Preservation Commission, Old City Hall, 222 Merrimack Street, Suite 310, Lowell, MA 01852
(508) 458-7653